



GUIDE TO THE ERICA BELL COLLECTION

DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Title:	Erica Bell collection
Collection dates:	1975 - 1990
Creator:	Erica Bell
Languages represented:	English
Repository:	Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Sydney Library https://library.sydney.edu.au/collections/rare-books/
Extent:	5 archival boxes
Genre and Forms:	Manuscripts, typescripts, photographs, cassette tapes, 4 track reel to reel tapes, correspondence, published works.
Abstract:	Erica Bell interviewed sixteen Australian poets in 1989 as part of her Ph.D thesis at the University of Queensland. (The interview with Les Murray in 1986 was part of her Honors thesis). The collection of interviews and related material was purchased by Fisher Library in 1995.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Provenance

Collection created by Erica Bell and sold to the Library in 1995.

Access

Rare Books and Special Collections is a closed access collection located on Level 1 of Fisher Library. Please make an appointment to use material from Rare Books and Special Collections using the online request form at <https://library.sydney.edu.au/collections/rare-books/request-form.html>

Staff will retrieve the material for you which must be read under supervision in the Rare Books Reading Room. You must provide identification (eg, University of Sydney library card, driver's license, passport) while you are using the material.

Copyright information

The status of copyright of materials described in this guide and other collections of papers in the custody of the University of Sydney Library is governed by copyright law in Australia. Special provisions, access conditions and restrictions apply governing the use of, photoduplication or publication of the items described. Readers should consult with Rare Books and Special Collections Library staff for further information concerning these conditions.

Preferred citation

Erica Bell collection , Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Sydney Library.

Biographical note

Not known.

Local Catalogue Headings

Australian poetry
Adamson, Robert
Bolton, Ken
Duggan, Laurie
Forbes, John
Hammial, Philip
Hemensley, Kris
Hutchinson, Gary
Jenkins, John
Johnston, Martin
Jones, Rae Desmond
Kenny, Robert
Krausmann, Rudi
Maiden, Jennifer
Murray, Les A.
Roberts, Nigel
Tranter, John
Wearne, Alan

DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

Part one: material relating to the interviews

Original interviews by Erica Bell and other original material directly relevant to the interviews.

Bell 1

Collection includes a copy of the questions (5 pages) sent to all sixteen poets who participated in the 1989 interviewing project for the Ph.D (not including Les Murray who was interviewed in 1986 as part of an Honours Thesis and was asked other questions). Of the sixteen poets who were part of the 1989 interviews, two had to respond in writing to the questions sent to them - Ken Bolton and John Jenkins.

The list of standard questions each poet was asked to suggest the breadth and significance of the interviewing project. The interviews offer autobiographical information, detailed information about poets' construction of the meaning of their poetry (particularly difficult poems which have eluded critical understanding), information

about how poets see their writing in relation to key developments in Australian writing and poetry, detailed discussions of key individuals, cliques and forums for Australian poetry in the modern period, discussion of particular definitions of the new Australian poetry by John Tranter and others, poets' perceptions of the role of the poet and poetry in Australian society, as well as information about how poets see the mechanisms by which literary success occurs in Australia. The interviews offer a detailed retrospective of the modern period of Australian poetry by poets often associated with what has been called the new Australian poetry: more than that, poets were asked the kind of questions which could, and did, provoke disagreement with existing critical understandings of the period.

Bell 2

Master tapes

Cassette tapes

Interview with Les Murray - 25th-29th August 1986 - set of six C90 cassette tapes (this is the only interview which was not recorded on broadcast quality tape).

4 track reel to reel audio tape

Interviews were conducted roughly around a standard set of questions and include readings of some poems.

Bell 3

Interview with Alan Wearne - 1st May 1989 recorded at Newcastle during Wearne's writer-in-residence at Newcastle University

Bell 4

Interview with Gary Hutchinson - 13th-June 1989 recorded at Carlton Melbourne

Bell 5

Interview with Robert Kenny - 12th June 1989 recorded at Fitzroy Melbourne

Bell 6

4. Interview with John Tranter - 20th May 1989 recorded at Stanmore Sydney

Bell 7

Interview with Robert Adamson - 16th June 1989 in the presence of Juno Adamson at Cheero Point near Brooklyn on the Hawkesbury River

Bell 8

Interview with Jennifer Maiden - 29th April 1989 recorded at Penrith, Sydney

Bell 9

Interview with John Forbes - 11th June 1989 recorded in Melbourne during his writer in-residence at Deakin University

Bell 10

Interview with Philip Hammial 17th June 1989 recorded in Marrickville, Sydney

Bell 11

Interview with Rudi Krausmann - 30th April 1989 recorded at Paddington Sydney

Bell 12

Interview with Rae Desmond Jones - 17th June 1989 recorded at Summer Hill Sydney

Bell 13

Interview with Kris Hemensley - 12th June 1989 recorded in Melbourne

Bell 14

Interview with Laurie Duggan - 12th June 1989 recorded in Melbourne

Bell 15

Interview with Nigel Roberts - mid June 1989 recorded in Sydney
Please note – transcript never received.

Bell 16

Interview with Martin Johnston - 17th June 1989 recorded in Darlinghurst Sydney [the interview with Martin Johnston was recorded shortly before his death, in the home of his estranged wife, while Martin was suffering from alcoholism]

The collection includes hard copy of the all the above interviews except the Nigel Roberts' interview.

Les Murray 141 pages with annotations by the poet in his handwriting

Alan Wearne 40 pages

Gary Hutchinson 29 pages

Robert Kenny 32 pages

John Tranter 73 pages

Robert Adamson 69 pages

Jennifer Maiden 41 pages (also includes a 21 page edited copy of the original interview with annotations by hand by Jennifer Maiden 21 pages)

John Forbes 52 pages

Philip Hammial 34 pages

Rudi Krausmann 45 pages

Rae Desmond Jones 32 pages

Kris Hemensley 46 pages

Laurie Duggan 47 pages

Martin Johnston 30 pages

The collection includes an electronic copy of all unedited interviews except the Les Murray, Martin Johnston and Nigel Roberts interviews)

The collection includes C90 cassette tape copies of broadcast quality master tapes of all interviews except the Nigel Roberts and Martin Johnston interviews - as noted above Les Murray interview only ever existed on C90 tape to begin with.

Letters from poets

Bell 17

Ken Bolton. Two page handwritten letter (undated, probably late 1989) discussing the construction of poetry in Tranter's anthology and other anthologies of Australian poetry.

Bell 18

Ken Bolton. Seven page handwritten letter (undated, probably late 1989) responding in writing to the standard set of interview questions (also two cover sheets discussing the published work and availability for interviewing of John Jenkins, as well as my letter to Ken Bolton which details and slightly modifies the standard interview questions).

Bell 19

Clive Faust. Three page handwritten letter dated 27th May 1989 explaining his attitude to literary criticism in Australia and why he will not consent to being interviewed.

Bell 20

Kris Hemensley. Two page typed letter dated 15 October 1990 explaining Kris Hemensley's attitude to the interviewing project and his recent literary activities.

Bell 21

John Jenkins. Ten and a half typed pages dated 15 October 1989 responding in writing to the standard set of interview questions (Jenkins was overseas when interviewing took place).

Bell 22

Les Murray. Two postcards, one four page letter and a sheet with the poem "The Young Woman Visitor" with comments by the poet, all explaining the background to the interview and Les Murray's attitude to being interviewed 1986-87.

Bell 23

Rudi Krausmann. Two page letter dated 28 February 1990.

Bell 24

Alan Wearne. Three page handwritten letter undated (probably early 1989) offering details about his recent writing (not yet published) and explaining that he has persuaded a number of Melbourne poets to participate in the interviewing project.

Plus an assortment of brief letters written around 1989 of a page or less from poets explaining their whereabouts and willingness to be interviewed, or their response to a transcript of the interview, or comments about their poetry and Australian poetry generally, as well as information about manuscripts and other records of the period such as diaries in their possession:

Bell 25

Robert Adamson (2 letters)

Bell 26

Juno Adamson (for Robert Adamson - 1 letter)

Bell 27

Ken Bolton (2 postcards/1 letter)

Bell 28

Laurie Duggan (3 letters)

Bell 29

John Jenkins (6 letters/4 postcards)

Bell 30

Jennifer Maiden (3 letters)

Bell 31

John Tranter (5 letters)

Bell 32 (MISSING)

John Forbes (1 letter)

Bell 33

Tim Thorne (1 page)

Bell 34

Alan Wearne (1 letter/2 postcards)

Bell 35

Rudi Krausmann (2 letters/1 postcard)

Bell 36

Rae Desmond Jones (1 letter)

Bell 37

Philip Hammial (2 letters)

Bell 38

Ken Taylor (1 letter/1 postcard but he was never interviewed)

Bell 39

John Scott (1 letter but he was never interviewed)

Bell 40

A handwritten letter of one and half pages from Brenda Beaver explaining why Bruce Beaver cannot be interviewed.

Bell 41

Administrative information for interviews

Photographs

Bell 42

Photographs of Les Murray and sites visited with the poet which he says are the setting of his poetry and/or sites of significance for his family. 16 photographs taken in 1986 (not included in the Honours thesis (negatives included of all Les Murray photographs).

Literary analyses by E Bell summarising the interview project

Bell 43

Erica Bell. *The New Australian Poetry*. A discussion of the findings of the interview SELL 43 project, highlighting the factors influencing the formation of the new Australian poetry. Seminar presented to Queensland University English Department 1989. 26 pages.

Bell 44

Erica Bell. *The New Australian Poetry*: draft of a book in progress. A discussion of the modern period of Australian poetry and how groups of poets came to be located outside the dominant definitions of the new Australian poetry which draws heavily upon the evidence of the interview project. 1991. 49 pages. [some overlap with the introduction of the thesis, although the argument is quite different since it concerns the mechanisms by which other groups of poets and poetries (concrete poetry, women's poetry, street poetry) came to be located outside the new language poetry in Australia. In contrast, the introduction describes the different poetry cultures which developed post 1968 by way of contextualising and contrasting the features of a new language poetry in Australia associated with John Tranter and others].

Part two: Literary analyses by E. Bell about the poets interviewed

Bell 45

"'Those Gods made Permanent': Some Language Poetry in Australia 1968-88". Unpublished Ph.D Thesis submitted in the English Department of the University of Queensland. An electronic copy of the thesis is included.

With regard to the relationship of the thesis to the interview collection: It must be emphasised that, while the collection includes a copy of my Ph.D thesis, that thesis hardly utilised the primary material (interviews etc) I collected in the course of my study. The interviews were completed in the later stages of my Ph.D research: this meant that the questions I asked were ones that would be informed by knowledge of "gaps" in information on the period. It also meant I collected a vast amount of material that my already written thesis could not accommodate. In any event, the author was dead in that English Department and few academics believed as I did that the critic researching living poets had a kind of duty to collect and generate records that could be preserved for future study. I also thought (and it informs all the interviews) that the writer of a literary work can offer a very interesting reading of that work, a reading which is worth recording. However, when writing my thesis I avoided references to anything living poets had said in line with the orthodoxy that frowned upon such references to a writerly authority.

Thus my Ph.D thesis is a series of detailed textual analyses of the poetry associated with John Tranter's construction of a new Australian writing which is informed by Derrida but it includes only a few references to the interviews. As such it is a thesis useful to researchers who want to read detailed and convincing analyses of difficult poetry of the period (often book length poems) which I felt represented the key achievements of this generation of poets. I used the interview material to help me avoid errors in textual interpretation, and correctly name more obscure literary and other references in the exegesis of difficult poems, as well as check many factual statements in the thesis which the poets told me other critics had got wrong. The six hundred odd pages of interview transcripts have not been read by anyone other than myself and one or two other poets (with the one exception of the Tranter interview although a severely truncated version of the John Tranter interview was published in *Southerly* in 1991).

Bell 46

"The Mouthless Image of God': Philosophical threads in Les Murray's Poetry and Prose". Unpublished dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of a Master's Qualifying Degree at Queensland University 1986. Thesis includes 26 colour photographs which, as noted in this thesis, are illustrations of sites of significance in Les Murray's poetry (the poet drove me around Bunyah and pointed to features of the landscape which were the subject of specific poems). Unlike the Ph.D thesis, this thesis was submitted with an appendix presenting the transcript of the interview. The body of this early thesis weaves some of the interview material into textual analyses of Les Murray's poetry.

Part three: Other items included in the collection which are relevant to the Ph.D thesis

Tapes

Bell 47

Poetry readings by Ken Bolton live at Club Foote - recorded 1987 published as an EAF tape in 1989.

Photographs

Bell 48

23 large photographs (A4 to A5 size) of Robert Adamson taken by Juno Adamson, which also show the Hawkesbury River settings of Robert Adamson's poetry, as well as other Australian poets and writers (Richard Tipping, Dorothy Hewitt, A.D. Hope)

Books/Journals

(some possibly rare books included here)

Bell 49

After the Rage: South Australian Women's Art and Writing. Edited by Tess Brady and Jenny Boulton. South Australia: Tutu Press 1983.

Bell 50

Ken Bolton and John Jenkins. The Ferrara Poems. Adelaide: The Experimental Art Foundation 1989.

Bell 51

Chimera: Journal of the New Writers' Group. Brisbane: Sheson Press 1983.

Bell 52

Laurie Duggan. The Epigrams of Martial. Melbourne: Scripsi 1989.

Bell 53

The Ear in a Wheatfield 1973-76 A Portrait of a Magazine. Edited by Kris Hemensley. Melbourne: Rigmarole Books 1985. [a selection of writings from issues 1 to 19 of Hemensley's journal The Ear in a Wheatfield]

Bell 54

Fighting Arts (Godhead) A Meuse Anthology. (contains writing by John Forbes, John Tranter and other poets of the period). Sydney: Published around 1978.

Bell 55

John Forbes. Thin Ice and other Poems. Surfers Paradise Press 1990.

Bell 56

Going Down Swinging. No. 3. Victoria: 1981.

Bell 57

Les Gray. Carlton. Melbourne: Sun Books 1973. [a book of photographs of Carlton with an introduction by Garrie Hutchinson].

Bell 58

Philip Hammial. Swarm. Sydney: Island Press 1979.

Bell 59

Philip Hammial. Pell Mell. Wentworth Falls: Black Lightning Press 1988.

Bell 60

Garrie Hutchinson. Fifteen Rounds with Gorgeous George. [a play in a book of plays entitled "Short Plays for the Australian Stage" which includes plays by Barry Dickens and Margo Hilton]. Victoria: Yackandandah 1987.

Bell 61

Garrie Hutchinson. Nothing Unsayable said Right. Melbourne: Sun Books 1974.

Bell 62

Garrie Hutchinson. Terror Australis. Melbourne: Outback Press 1975.

Bell 63

John Jenkins and Ken Bolton. Airbourne Dogs. Adelaide: Brunswick Hills Press 1988.

Bell 64

Robert Kenny. Dead Oceans Poems. Melbourne: Rigmarole of the Hours 1975.

Bell 65

Robert Kenny. 'Poem' (Poem In Inverted Commas). Victoria: Ragman Productions 1975.

Bell 66

Robert Kenny. Etcetera. Rigmarole of the Hours 13. Victoria: Ragman Productions 1978.

Bell 67

Robert Kenny. The Last Adventures of Christian Doom: Private I. Victoria: Rigmarole Books 1982.

Bell 68

Robert Kenny. Dark Lyrics (with illustrations by Robert Kenny). Victoria: Edition 200 1987.

Bell 69

Rudi Krausmann. From Another Shore (with drawing by Brett Whitely). Sydney: Wild and Woolley 1975.

Bell 70

Rudi Krausmann. Paradox. Sydney: Southwood Press 1981.

Bell 71

Rudi Krausmann. A Trilogy: Everyman, The Perfection, The Word. Sydney: Hale and Iremonger 1989.

Bell 72

Rudi Krausmann, editor. M.A.T.I.A. Literature. Occasional publication. Australia Council 1987.

Bell 73

Rudi Krausmann, editor. Aspect Art and Literature. No. 32-33 [this was the last issue edited by Krausmann probably early 1985].

Bell 74

Rudi Krausmann, editor. Aspect Art and Literature. Vol 4/3 1979.

Bell 75

925. Issues 11 to 20 [nine issues bound]. [This journal was a free magazine published by a worker's collective and was important to the treatment of Australian street poetry in my thesis: it is a bound volume full of poetry, illustrations of poets, and details about the activities of street poetry groups: the journal evolved out of a series of weekly poetry readings organised by Thalia at the Universal cafe in Fitzroy, Melbourne in 1978. Apparently the journal continued for five years or twenty issues].

Bell 76

John A. Scott. From: the Flooded City. Brisbane: Makar Press 1981.

Bell 77

Jennifer Maiden, ed. Collection of 5 editions of Dark City anthologies of poetry workshops conducted by Maiden in Blacktown, Sydney, dated 1980-1988. 1&2, 1979-1980 only.

Bell 78

Jennifer Maiden. For the Left Hand. Poetry Australia Special Issue. Number 78 1981.

Bell 79

Jennifer Maiden. The Terms. Sydney: Hale and Iremonger 1982.

Bell 80

Jennifer Maiden. The Trust. Wentworth Falls: Black Lightning Press 1988.

Bell 81

Missing Forms. Melbourne: Collective Effort Press 1981. [this anthology of concrete poetry in Australia was edited by Peter Murphy. It was important to my thesis because it is the most comprehensive collection of concrete poetry I uncovered, given to me by Garrie Hutchinson who has had some association with concrete poets in Melbourne. Both Missing Forms and the bound copies of 925 are records of particular kinds of poetry cultures and poetries which form an interesting interface with groups of better known Australian poets who have emerged in the last twenty years].

Manuscripts

Rae Desmond Jones. Original manuscripts of poems

Bell 82

"rubick's cube"

Bell 83

"the empty beach"

Bell 84

"talking blues"

Bell 85

"the soldier"

Bell 86

"in memoriam donovan clarke". 6 typed pages.

John Forbes. Typed A4 pages of poems titled

Bell 87

"Tranteresque"

Bell 88

"The History of Nostalgia"

Bell 89

"Middle Age"

Bell 90

"Night Shift"

Hand-edited galleys by Rudi Krausmann of three of his plays

Bell 91

Everyman (not included)

Bell 92

The Perfection and The Word. 16 A3 pages.

Bell 93

Bill Marshall-Stoneking and Nigel Roberts. The Ern Malley Half-Hour: A Treatment. Typed first draft of a text in the genre of a proposal for a television program which comments upon the relationship of Australian poetry to popular culture and includes references to other poets of the period.

Les Murray. Copies of typed drafts of dated poems given to me in 1986 by Murray prior to their publication:

Bell 94

"Fastness"

Bell 95

"The Dream of Wearing Shorts Forever"

Bell 96

"Forty Acre Ethno"

Bell 97

"The Climb Down"

Bell 98

"Hearing Impairment"

Bell 99

"Midwinter Haircut"

Bell 100

"Lotus Dam"

Bell 101

"Leaf Spring"

Bell 102

"The Kitchens"

Bell 103

"The Milk Lorry"

Bell 104

"At the Aquatic Carnival"

Bell 105

"Roman cage Cups"

Bell 106

"Bats Ultrasound"

Bell 107

"The Edgeless"

Bell 108

"The China Pear Trees"

Bell 109

"1980 in a Street of Federation Houses"

Bell 110

"The Mecaethon 1950, 1906-29" (this poem is difficult to read in parts due to poor copying)

Bell 111

"The Butter Factory"

Bell 112

"The Kitchens"

Bell 113

"Joker as Told"

Bell 114

"Inverse Ballad"

Bell 115

"Infra Red"

Bell 116

"Cumulus"

Bell 117

"The Lake Surnames"

Bell 118

"Tropical Window"

Bell 119

"When Bounty is Down to Persimmons and Lemons"

Bell 120

"At Thunderbolt's Grave in Uralla"

Bell 121

"Relics of Sandy"

Bell 122

"Poetry and Religion"

Bell 123

"Nocturne"

Bell 124

"At Min Min Camp": also a photocopy of an early typed draft, heavily annotated in Murray's handwriting, of the essay

Bell 125

"Poems and Poesies" which is the most significant exposition of Murray's attitude to poetry that exists to date (12 pages) given to me by the poet in 1986.

Bell 126

Photocopy of one A4 sheet showing the original list of poets John Tranter considered including in his anthology *The New Australian Poetry*. The list shows that, for example, Tranter originally considered including Mark O'Connor and John Millet in this anthology. The ticks next to the poets' names on this list are by Tranter and probably indicate a further short-list. The list was given to me by Tranter in 1989.

Alan Wearne. Manuscripts sent to me in early 1989 of work not published in his books: in my opinion these works are of considerable literary merit and are themselves worth a research project, as they are at least equal to Wearne's successful book *The Nightmarkets*

Bell 127

"Nothing but Thunder" (typed poem of 29 pages)

Bell 128

(also included is an essay on "Nothing But Thunder" titled "Though Not for Amateurs: thoughts on hubris or the lack of it" which at the time Wearne informed me would appear in *Island Magazine* - the essay gives the background to the writing and genesis of that narrative poem - it is 10 typed pages long)

Bell 129

"Seeing Other People" (typed poem/play of 21 pages)

Bell 130

"Poem for Melanie" (typed poem of 5 pages)

Bell 131

"The Months in the Country" (typed poem of 2 pages)

Bell 132

"Still Talking about Jazz" (typed poem of 3 pages dated early 1977)

Bell 133

"Wayman" (typed poem of 1 page)

Bell 134

"May June July 1977" (typed poem of 1 page)

Bell 135

"Jane, Running" (typed poem of 2 pages)

Bell 136

plus 8 pages of poems by other poets translated by Alan Wearne from the original French.

Miscellaneous

Bell 137

Catalogue of books published by Robert Kenny's publishing concern *Rigmarole Press* with photographs and biographical sketches of writers who, as explained in the introduction, produced a new writing in Australia. The catalogue is dated 1983.

Bell 138

They dared to live! The generation of '68. Advertisement of John Tranter's *New Australian Poetry* with around 1000 words describing the new poetry in humorous terms. A4 page of typed text with illustration.

Bell 139

Advertisement for John Forbes' magazine *Surfers Paradise* issue no 2. Around 60 typed words.

Bell 140

Advertisement for "The Seventh Annual General Balmain Reading of Prose and Verse (10 December 1972). A4 typed sheet of paper listing poets.

Bell 141 (MISSING)

A handwritten list by Garrie Hutchinson of places in Melbourne and addresses - where poets socialised and read their work in the late sixties/ early seventies. Six places listed on an A4 sheet of paper (some, like La Mama, are well known, others, like "johnnie's Green Room" are less well-known. One place - the Pram Factory has disappeared and is now the site of a supermarket).

Bell 142

Curriculum vitae for Garrie Hutchinson listing his literary and other works. Three A4 typed pages.

Bell 143

Mark O'Connor. Poems (typescript). A mini anthology of poems from the books *Reef Poems* (UQP, 1976), *The Eating Tree* (Angus & Robertson, 1980), and from the not yet published *Selected Poems*.

Bell 144

Martin Duwell. *A Possible Contemporary Poetry*. Interviews with thirteen poets from *The New Australian Poetry*. St Lucia, Queensland, Makar Press, 1982.

Bell 145

Dorothy Hewett. *Greenhouse*. Sydney, Big Smoke Books, 1979.

Bell 146

An Inflection of Silence and Other Poems. Edited by Christopher Pollnitz. Newcastle, NSW, University of Newcastle, 1986.

Bell 147

Martin Johnston. *Cicada Gambit*. Sydney, NSW, Hale & Iremonger, 1983.

Bell 148

Les A. Murray. *Selected Poems*. Manchester, Carcanet Press, 1986.

Bell 149

Les A. Murray. *The Daylight Moon*. Sydney, NSW, Angus & Robertson, 1987.

Bell 150

Les A. Murray. *The People's Otherworld*. Sydney, NSW, Angus & Robertson, 1983.

Bell 151

The New Australian Poetry. Edited by John Tranter. St Lucia, Queensland, Makar Press, 1979.